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Knudsen, Inger Bjørn; Knudsen, Line Vestergaard

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“This is where we do it!”

Materiality, family, and musealization in second homes¹

INGER BJØRN KNUDSEN & LINE VESTERGAARD KNUDSEN

Abstract: *The materiality of family-inherited second homes offers a rich example of musealization in the private sphere. Presuming that relational socio-material practices that enact family culture and history take place at these houses, we conducted an observation and interview study by visiting ten family-inherited second homes in Denmark. In our analysis of these visits, we examine various practices by which musealization takes place in the second homes. We emphasize that the inherited second homes set scenes for musealization practices concerning a wide collective and temporally elongated family member circle. We also claim that unstable and undecided musealization practices can sometimes be useful for balancing past, present, and future claims of the second home's materiality. We finally suggest that musealization practices in family-inherited second homes present vibrant and negotiable ways of relating to the past that might inspire cultural historical museums.*

Keywords: Second homes, family, musealization, materiality

How does inheritance influence humans, and how is it managed and used in human life? What do we do about the materiality we inherit? On a broad cultural and societal level, such questions are directed at our cultural heritage institutions, such as museums and archives. What objects should be collected in museums, what should not, and what types of documentation, preservation, and communication of objects should be practiced? In short, the socio-material practices of musealization in which museums engage on behalf of the entire population are regularly researched and debated. Still,

practices of musealization also exist outside of institutions. For instance, private objects and houses can be enrolled in certain processes of appreciation and care. In this paper, we argue that in the Nordic countries, one such site of musealization is the second home. In Denmark, as in other Nordic countries (Müller 2007), owning or having access to a second home is quite normal.² Coastal tourism in holiday residences became part of Danish bourgeois life in the late nineteenth century (Dahlkild 1991), but second homes did not become part of a broad Danish recreational

culture until the 1960s–70s. At that time, second homes were typically small, modest, and often privately built houses in areas near the coast, setting the scene for the recreational family life (Tress 2002:115f). Most first-generation owners of second homes are now reaching old age or have already passed away. Consequently, the number of inherited second homes has increased in recent years. The majority of these houses are family inherited. This means that heirs tend to have known and used the homes before taking them over and, therefore, typically have a special connection to them. These second homes and their related objects are literally heritage items that migrate through generations of owners and users in the same family. Further, as we will discuss, these houses are breeding grounds for family-making, including family practices, culture, and history. As one of our participants said, “It’s part of our family pattern that here [in the second home] we are together. Here, we are united. This is where we do it [family life]”³ (Karen).

We consider the Nordic second home part of a multidimensional culture – a site for seasonal and recreational holiday life, located in a specific geographical and identity-generating landscape (Kaltenborn 1998; Pitkänen 2008). It has a changeable position within or beyond pairings, such as tradition versus modernity, dwelling versus mobility, and domesticity versus escape (e.g., Haldrup 2004; Garvey 2008; Ellingsen & Hidle 2013; Gunnemark 2016). A broad and interdisciplinary field of literature signals that Nordic second-home culture is certainly not an academically untouched issue, but especially two recent large projects (Gunnemark 2016; Lien & Abram 2019) have inspired us. Both projects, like ours, relate to the museum sector. The first (Gunnemark 2016) gathered researchers from museums, archives,

universities, etc. to conduct research on Nordic second-home culture and the heritage of summer life, whereas the latter (Lien & Abrams 2019) was carried out in a museum–university collaboration that included the making of an exhibition about the Norwegian *hytta* at Norsk Folkemuseum. Both projects examined Nordic second-home culture in the post-war period and particularly emphasized family-making, materiality, memory, and heritage as vital and intertwined phenomena within this culture. In our study, we focused more narrowly on the socio-material *musealization* practices that take place in *inherited* second homes in Denmark. We investigated how musealization practices unfold in such houses and how they relate to the family constitution. We examined these practices as a form of musealization that occurs outside of the institutionalized domain. We were curious about whether family-inherited second homes can offer an interesting perspective on institutionalized cultural heritage work.

HERITAGE AS RELATIONAL MATERIALISM

As part of a post-humanistic attempt to see and understand human relationships with our material surroundings as *flat* (DeLanda 2006) and engaged, less human-controlled, and distanced, the notion of *relational materialism* stresses the primary significance of socio-material practices and their *relational effects* (Law 2004). When we discuss heritage objects through the lens of relational materialism, their roles as both *producers* and *products* of memory, social affinities, knowledge, and experiences are at stake, notably the continually constituting and changing relational practices. Numerous studies on heritage-making have adopted this framework. Edensor (2011) demonstrated how buildings register within assemblages of human

and non-human historical elements and how renovation – and, thus, material changes – results in withholding some connections to the past and the dispatching of others. Researchers have also analyzed the significance of object–expert entanglements to the constitution of knowledge in museums (e.g. Mordhorst 2009; Maurstad, 2012) and have found that complex interplays between discursive and material elements knit museum exhibitions together (e.g. Macdonald 2002; Yaneva, 2003). The core interests of such studies are the relational socio-material practices that constitute heritage, which reveal that both humans and materiality take part in heritage making and that each one creates possibilities and restraints for the other. Likewise, in our study, we investigated the socio-material practices and processes by which materiality and family culture enact each other in family-inherited second homes.

VISITING FAMILY-INHERITED SECOND HOMES

We collected data for our study, engaging in ten meetings with 15 second homeowners at their family-inherited houses. The houses were located in designated second-home areas that mainly originated in the 1960s–70s, situated near the coast of Limfjorden, Denmark. The interviewed homeowners were eight females and seven males between 45 and 75 years old. We asked them to show us the houses, interiors, and objects, tell us the stories of these houses, and describe their use. During and after these tours, we conducted semi-structured interviews focusing on the houses (including interiors and objects), their use, and plans/visions for the homes. The meetings ranged from one to two hours. All visits and interviews were conducted during the summer

of 2019.⁴ In this paper, we use pseudonyms to refer to participants.

MUSEALIZATION PRACTICES AND SECOND HOMES

When analyzing the observations and interviews, we particularly looked for material engagement practices with the heritage in the houses. Within an institutionalized framework, musealization can be usefully divided into several connected concrete practices: collection, documentation, preservation, research, and communication. Museums, more or less proactively, identify and collect things and then transform them into museum objects, which are withdrawn from their prior circulation (Appadurai 1988). In other words, they stop serving in kitchens and dining rooms, in stables and factories, and so on. In return, as museum objects, they become part of collections, research, and communication. Situated in mutually constitutive relations with museum expertise, they perform versions of the world (Maurstad 2012). Even house-museums, which endeavor to avoid physically de-contextualizing museum materiality from its former relations by preserving the “original assemblages” (Young 2007:73) and “the lived context of the commemorated life” (Hancock 2010:14), work to tell stories that were not told by the previous inhabitants in everyday life. Musealization, thus, connotes an ontological shift (Maurstad 2012:184) that objects go through, thereby losing their former relationships and relational effects. Through preservation, documentation, research, and dissemination, they are inserted into other ontologies.

Outside heritage institutions, musealization can be seen as practices in which citizens in private gather and preserve materiality (Macdonald 2013; Simmons 2016). Such



Fig. 1. Inherited kitchen interior and utensils. Photo: Line Vestergaard Knudsen.

activities have been studied in relation to valorized objects, collections, storytelling, and archives (Pearce 1998; Rosenberg 2011; Barrett & Stallybrass 2013; Bennett 2018; Woodham et al. 2019). Such musealization practices often withdraw everyday objects (e.g., garments, watches, instruments, and knick-knacks) from their previous circulation, causing them to assume the function of bearers of history, identity, and ontological security (Bennett 2018). In this study, we observed collection practices of this nature in the second homes we visited. Several heirs had a cabinet of special documents, pictures, or other items

or a storeroom filled with inherited items withdrawn from use, such as kitchen utensils (bowls, glasses, plates, thermos, etc.), interior decor (paintings, lamps, hanging figures, etc.), garments (hats, rush slippers, jackets), and other personal objects (walking sticks, jewelry, glasses, etc.) belonging to ancestors. In most instances, these items were highly valued and taken care of; in certain cases, it seemed instead as if things were just stored until they could be discarded. However, in the second homes, we primarily found musealization in more active and practical applications, as we found heirlooms scattered around the houses,



Fig. 2. Grandfather's plane. Grandfather was a carpenter and build the second home. Photo: Inger Bjørn Knudsen.

both for decoration and use. In the kitchens, we found that most utensils and objects for table setting were inherited, just as furniture in both living rooms and bedrooms. Linens, blankets, curtains and all kinds of tools for house and garden maintenance had typically been inherited from the former owners and were also still in use. In addition, new items had been purchased both for use and decorative purposes, and some heirlooms had been discarded, as we will discuss in a later part of our analysis.

While inherited materiality in use was common to all second homes we visited, various orders of preservation seemed to be at stake:

Many of the things have always been here: dinnerware, for instance. We preserve as much as possible here.

This dinnerware is back from my grandmother's and grandfather's days, and that's a long time ago because they bought the house in 1969, and then my parents brought things for the house, and then we did. We have many things. (Karen)

Here, we see an example of an almost all-inclusive preservation strategy where the old age of materiality is the argument for preservation. As the family has a past, the criteria for selection and preservation is that "things have been here always" – that is, they were part of grandparents' or parents' lives. To some extent, this resembles the ideal (or illusion) of house-museums – to preserve the house as intact as possible and maintain the original assembly of objects. However, in most

of the visited houses in this study, preservation was carried out only in parts and not to retain the interior and house entirely as it was inherited. Rather, some specific objects were often selected for preservation in conjunction with rich narratives:

Some things should not be thrown away; they were my grandfather's. He bought this parcel, and he started up this whole thing [the second home]. He could build his own house; he was a carpenter. Things from his days must be preserved. (Sara)

Here, we see traces of a belief that “objects are carriers of stories that, if they had only had an oral tradition to support them, would probably have disappeared into oblivion” (Selmer 2014:107). Particular objects and interiors become material witnesses to earlier lives and relationships to the second home that family members used to have. In such instances, telling the stories of objects, and thereby maintaining the provenance of materiality, is a significant part of musealization. Whereas museums document the provenance of objects via written registration practices, the oral transmission of narratives and knowledge of materiality seem pivotal in second homes. This also pertains to objects that have lost parts of their material or social functionality:

We have a camel bell; my parents brought it home. It hung in the doorway toward the terrace. We often played at the beach, and then when it was dinnertime, they rang the bell, and that could be heard from far away [...]. (Susan)

That embroidery I made for my grandfather. It was a birthday present for him. Then my grandparents hung it up on the wall here. Now, I rinse it once in a while. I don't dare to touch it too much. I think it will dissolve if I try to twist it. (Karen)



Fig. 3. Embroidery, gift from granddaughter to grandfather. Photo: Inger Bjørn Knudsen.

The camel bell was now broken and no longer served its functional purpose. As the grandfather, who had received the embroidery as a gift, was no longer living, the embroidery was no longer performing its original social function. However, since the narratives surrounding these objects were strong enough to compensate for their broken materiality or disappeared social function, the objects were being conserved and handled as worthy of preservation through storage and careful cleaning routines. Just as some museum objects maintain certain strong stories and parts of heritage, these objects are significant in establishing and maintaining orders of family history in the second homes.

Even though, freezing and stabilizing the entire assemblies of second houses was not the typical preservation practice in the second homes, the stabilizing of assemblies on a smaller scale could be found. For instance, part of the embroidery's physical context was preserved, as it continued to hang in the same place. The physical appearance was also upheld: The embroidery must appear clean and white as in the past. It cannot be dislocated to the bottom of a cabinet, nor be used as a cover, lest it attract stains. Instead, it must hang as a stabilized memorial to a grandfather–granddaughter relationship. Here, musealization entails not only retaining the object and communicating the story around it, but also maintaining a certain assembly in terms of the location and conservation practice connected to the object.

While such a decorative item could easily maintain a position frozen in the past while simultaneously being preserved, many utensils in the second homes had become worn out from not having undergone proper decoupling from their previous use. A slightly broken plate, a blanket, an old bench, or an old-fashioned entrance door would be kept in use and eventually break. Even as such heirloom objects were still in use, they often had a different, more sacred, position than the other more recently acquired functional and decorative items.

We are so happy about the long dining table and the chairs. They came from my grandmother's home. She had this factory and a large household where many people had meals together. This table is from her old kitchen, and we are so happy that we still have it. (Maria)

The dining table was indeed not withdrawn from use and not set outside the context of its original function. Still, it constituted a form of

musealization incurred by the table's ability to form and reinforce a narrative of the family and especially of the grandmother as a significantly unifying person in the family. However, this dining table also points to a more enacted and embodied version of musealization. In one of the aforementioned Nordic projects on second homes, Swedish cultural geographer Maja Lagerqvist (2016) investigated the transformation of old smallholdings and farmhouses into second homes in Sweden. Many traces of the houses' previous usages and practices were retained by the new owners and users; wood-burning stoves, outdoor toilets, and other relict interiors were still in use. By engaging with these farmhouses' relict materiality, second-home users reenact and embody an altruistic recreational life close to nature. While this might satisfy personal holiday desires for peace and continuity, Lagerqvist concluded that they also help sustain the material traces, narratives, and traditions related to the Swedish past and adapt them to the present. Lagerqvist suggested viewing such second-home users as cultural heritage-makers and promoters on their own terms and their practices as perhaps a more alive alternative to institutional musealization practices. Similarly, the dining table as an heirloom object in use is particularly interesting because it constitutes a rich coincidence of materiality, storytelling, and use. Even if dining is not (yet) an old-fashioned relict practice, the family-specific heritage related to social dinners and cohesion embedded in the table is reenacted in highly concrete and material terms each time the family sits at the table dining together. The dining table and its related practices are shared among the living and dead family members. Perhaps they can even be understood as materializations of a close connection to a past family member. Here, musealization in the



Fig. 4. Grandmothers dining table and chairs. Photo: Line Vestergaard Knudsen.

second home unfolds as a living practice where socio-material elements intertwine.

While owners' recognition and validation of some inherited objects and materials in the second homes were evident, we also observed that materiality was not always deliberately and intentionally preserved. As mentioned earlier, some things were stored rather than consciously preserved and musealized, and others not changed and discarded because the second home had been inherited by several siblings who had difficulty in initiating and agreeing on decisions regarding changes in the second home. However, the durability of the family-making in these homes was dormant. A kitchen or a bedroom that was never replaced

or refurbished, thus contained stories that may not have been told for a while, but through their material presence had the opportunity to reappear. Therefore, we witnessed the preservation of materials for their narrative value, but narratives were also preserved because the materiality contained them.

As we have described, family-inherited materials are musealized and valued in second homes in various ways. Sometimes, preservation and conservation are managed to retain the original assemblage of the house. However, mostly musealization concerns certain objects and parts of the interior, while others are discarded, refurbished, and renewed. Sometimes, specific ancestors

give objects provenance and meaning (e.g., grandfather, grandmother). Sometimes, objects are reminiscent of specific past events (e.g., the camel bell that rang for dinner); and sometimes, objects activate and carry on the family's past (e.g., dinner table). Precisely the latter is what the house as a complex enables – it houses family traditions that establish and maintain family cohesion and continuity. We will look at this phenomenon in the next section of the analysis.

FAMILY AND HOUSES

Contemporary anthropology regards family and kinship as something continuously constituted and negotiated through practices, traditions, and materiality (Lien & Abrams 2018). The house is a classic example of materiality contributing to family-making (Carsten & Hugh-Jones 1995; Lien & Abrams 2018). For centuries in England, family-based houses constituted legal entities – thus, small kingdoms in the kingdom, with their own laws, hierarchies, traditions, and symbols. A House consisted of the physical properties and land as well as people, practices, and stories comprising each house. Also in today's core family, the house is an essential participant in the socio-material configuration of family life, with its own routines, sociality, and affiliation, and sometimes also conflict and coercion (Lien & Abrams 2018), and is, thus, more than just a functional or economic unit.

As a particular type of house, the second home is also been regarded a vital agent in family-making, particularly in several Norwegian studies (e.g., Howell 2006; Garvey 2008; Abram 2014; Lien & Abram 2018). Spending time in the second home involves numerous commitments and practical tasks carried out with the family (often, both

the core family and the wider family) and, through their unfolding, are precisely family *made* (Howell 2006). These tasks may include practical duties in and around the house, but also traditions relating to certain activities, such as joint hikes or pancake making. Danish scholars have described second homes as a particularly suitable scene for “familyness” (Haldrup & Larsen 2003:29), even when in a rented second home. The second home is, thus, a place where we practice and maintain the family, and here, the materiality of the second home is included in family-making practices, just as family-making is materialized in the second home (Lien & Abrams 2018). As mentioned previously, it was precisely in relation to family life that the second home had a breakthrough in Denmark in the 1960s–70s. Thus, from the start, these dwellings were part of the cultural history of family life.

Consistently, we observed the significance of broader family life and kinship (rather than only core family life) in the inherited second homes. Several heirs even spoke consciously about family cohesion and continuity as something they wished to facilitate in the present with the house as a site for broader family life:

It's a meeting place. We can meet all three families, and we also do that. We have a day in the spring and a day in the fall where we cut down and clean up, and we really enjoy it a lot. It's nice to have a project and meet about something that is not just eating. (Maria)

We do not see each other much in everyday – we both live in Holstebro – but we do not invite each other over to dinner. It's really a bit strange thinking about how we move up here and live together for 10–14 days in the summer. And then we say goodbye and go each our own way home. It's part

of our family pattern that here we are together. Here we are united. This is where we do it. (Karen)

SECOND HOMES PRACTICED AS A “WIDER FAMILY MATTER”

If we then transfuse inheritance into this assembly of second home materiality and family, it seems that even more is at stake. Inheritance can enrich the individual financially but it can also provide “depth to contemporary contexts that the individual experiences being a part of” (Selmer 2014:106). Thus, the mutual relationship between materiality and family-making often becomes even stronger when the second home is inherited. Very similar to Swedish ethnologist Kerstin Gunnemark’s finding that second homeowners see themselves as conducting the “management of family heritage” (2016:2), we found that owners regard themselves as significant caretakers of heritage on a family scale. In the related literature, we also see that the pivotal moment of inheritance transfer often causes problems, sometimes because elders have doubts about handing over responsibility to heirs (Pers et al. 2018) or because there is disagreement about who should inherit the second home (Lien & Abrams 2018). When a family sees its past, present, and future in a second home, the house is perceived as a “wider family matter” (Lien & Abram 2018:38), and then legal private property is not always acknowledged as the guiding principle. A wide range of people might find themselves strongly related to the house and, thus, claim influence on the future of the second home.

Generational shifts represent a main concern among second homeowners in previous Nordic studies, but this was not the case for any of our participants perhaps because most visited second homes had recently been inherited.

However, in other ways, several heirs were very concerned with thoughts about managing the materiality of the second homes in ways that best secure a continued valuation and strong position of the second home in the family. They were aware that their second homes were housing a “wider family matter” that a circle of family and relatives in the present, past, and future cared about. At the same time, several of the heirs saw the house as an asset to a family history for which they were responsible and would like to maintain.

It is probably that I want to link them [her children] to a story. I want them to hold on to a tradition. I want them to want to hold on ... It’s clear, when it’s been in my family, I hope that someone will keep using it [the house]. (Sara)

Several participants saw the specific materiality of the second home as integral to the preservation of family tradition:

Interviewer: What if you removed everything from here? What would your siblings say?

K: They would think it was strange ... They wouldn’t say anything ‘cause we agreed that it is us who will inherit the house. They would seem to be okay about it, but cohesion would disappear a bit; we tend to share this place. So, to change [the interior], we will try to do that gradually.⁵ (Karen)

In a way, these participants were strategically managing a part of the family’s social life and history through the inherited second home, intending to keep together both practiced social traditions and family heritage – that is, cohesion and continuity of the family.

However, in terms of broader concern, we also sensed dimensions of heritage that go

beyond the deliberate selective and self-curating performance of a family's history – a relationship to heritage as something particularly *other*. British geographer Caron Lipman investigated how residents of older houses, where many generations of former residents had lived, relate to the past of these houses: "For residents [...], encounters with material residues require an admission that the idea (or ideal) of home as something personal or private needs to sit alongside the fact that it is also inevitably a collective endeavor" (Lipman 2019:95).

Lipman emphasized that old houses are shared across people and times and that residents with this understanding balance their decisions regarding preservation or change between their perceptions of individual rights and collective responsibility, respectively. The collective responsibility views the preservation of the "home's past as part of an ethic of respect, care and custodianship" (Lipman 2019:85). In our study, care for the past of the second homes was not observed to such an extent; nevertheless, some parts of the houses' materiality had not been discarded or renewed even when, in rational terms, it would seem like the most obvious thing to do. Besides, we found that past owners and their "spirits" (Margit) had to be taken into account when things needed to be done in the houses: "Well, actually, we do nothing that they [her parents] do not support. Somehow, in the back of our minds, we bring them along always: What will they say about it?" (Anna)

In this way, material practices in the second homes also carried an element of care for the non-present. Thus, the making of family heritage in second homes can be regarded as embedded in practices where cohesion and continuity are consciously, and almost strategically, sought by the owners on behalf

of a wider family. At the same time, a more undefined and abstract relationship and respect for the past and ancestors may simultaneously be at stake. Thus, the second homes are "wider family matters" extending to both the future and the past. This relationship cannot always be explained and rationalized, but it is practiced and materialized in the modes of selecting, preserving, and communicating the materiality of the houses.

UNSTABILIZED AND NEGOTIABLE MUSEALIZED MATERIALITY

As we have partly touched upon, certain balances should be attained in the management of family inherited second homes. Preservation and use, the wider family, the past, the present, and the future are all elements that should be considered in relation to materiality in the second home, particularly in terms of the second home as a whole. As we have mentioned, most of the visited houses were built in the 1960s–70s, and some were initially highly primitive with adjoining buildings for a toilet, kitchen, and sleeping facilities. Today, several of the owners have improved, or are about to improve, their bathroom and kitchen facilities. Owners who decide to renovate, refurbish, or extend their houses frequently have future use in mind. They include broader concern for children and grandchildren in their thoughts when planning indoor spaces and facilities. One could state that they change the materiality of the second homes to preserve family culture.

This also means that materiality is continuously taken out of the houses and discarded. An object once emphasized as an important part of family history may well be downgraded to garbage at some point and, thus, end its tenure as, for example, a utility or storyteller. English

sociologist and geographer Kevin Hetherington (2004) emphasized the importance of understanding "dislocation" as part of socio-material relationships. Things are not only involved in maintaining specific social orders of belonging when we buy and use them; they also impact our social and cultural positions even when we get rid of them. For instance, we observed this when second homeowners deliberately removed certain objects from their houses, such as parents' tourist souvenirs from the Austrian Alps, to "make space for themselves" (Anna), for a new family constitution, and perhaps even newcomers to the family. However, Hetherington also noted that the dislocated items sometimes reappear. Such a return can happen both materially and intangibly, which indicates that we have not concluded our relationship with the thing, and that we continue to be somewhat indebted to it and, thus, also to something in our past: "Pots and pans may not literally start flying around the room if this [proper dislocation] is not done but representational instability will occur when the conduits for disposal do not operate effectively" (Hetherington 2004:171).

When dislocation work is not done properly, objects remain in an unstable position of abeyance, taken out of use, stored in a closet or a loft, or actually thrown out at the landfill, but they remain active in our consciousness. Hetherington compared the unfulfilled displacement to inheritance, in that inheritance also acts as a form of debt and commitment to the past and our ancestors. Inheritance points to an actual absence of the past and people of the past, who are simultaneously present and agents in relation to our presence. As touched upon earlier, some see museums producing permanent (Thompson 1994), stabilized, or sacralized (Macdonald 2013:148) objects, but according to Hetherington (2004), museum

objects are unstable, pending, and have transformable relationships to the past. They have been taken out of the market and practical use circuit for some time and have somewhat been discarded. However, in some cases, they are later put into exhibition contexts where they can serve as storytellers and maintainers of social and cultural order. In other instances, museum objects retreat to physical absence in well-regulated storage. However, there is always the potential that they can again be active and effective in some relations. They are neither properly stabilized nor properly dislocated, but all mutable and changeable objects that can be activated at any time in new relationships to humans and their pasts.

In the family-inherited second homes in the present study, proper dislocation was sometimes significant and marked clearly in almost ritual acts:

Alice: We removed the old couch in there. I cut it with a chainsaw; do you remember? [they laugh] Our children came in and asked, "What is going on here?"

Allan: We had just used it for cutting hedges, so it was right there.

Interviewer: Was it somehow symbolic?

Alice: Yes, maybe something like "making a fresh start."

(Alice and Allan)

Whether it was the couch being chopped up or the Austrian souvenirs that were resolutely run to the second-hand shop, several owners had been working consciously to get certain things out of the way (materially, mentally, and sentimentally), to create stability and order in their second home and family life. However, there were also other matters at stake in the second homes. Precisely, the retention and abeyant position of things seemed, at times,

almost cultivated by the heirs. For instance, in one house, two clocks were hanging on the wall; one was broken and supposed to be discarded, yet it still hung there in a waiting position.

Here, materiality is kept in limbo between use and musealization, value and garbage, presence and absence. Perhaps this signals instability in the social order: Does the house belong to the past, the present, or the future? What kinds of materiality are essential to family history and why? It often seemed to be an undecided and negotiable matter in the second homes, left unresolved and movable for some time, as if the house's relations with others, some earlier and some in the future, require an incompleteness, a movable musealization.

MUSEALIZATION IN THE SECOND HOME AND IN THE MUSEUM

In this analysis, we have highlighted how people relate to family-inherited materiality in second homes in ways similar to and distanced from the musealization conducted by museums. Of course, institutional, legislative, and academic frameworks are not at stake as in museums, where mission statements, strategic collection, and research plans, together with registration and conservation procedures, influence the musealization process. However, materiality is selected and preserved in second homes. Materiality is included in acts of discursive storytelling, just as in embodied practices and traditions (e.g., the embroidery, the dinner table, the house as a whole). The majority of inherited materiality is engaged in socio-material practices where family history and culture are at stake, such as eating by the dining table, using the garden shears or dishwashing in the old sink. Such practices

can be seen as strong and living examples of heritage culture that might inspire museums to put more effort into combining musealization with practices and enactment when it comes to selecting, documenting, and communicating objects and collections. How do institutionally musealized objects preserve the practices with which they were once intertwined, which shaped them, and which they participated in shaping? Such a question not only applies to the crafts and technological practices related to past objects and machinery but also to the more intangible social and cultural orders once enacted with objects of all kinds that are now stored in museum collections.

Another point centers around the more unresolved and movable preservation practices in second homes. The relationship between desired contemporary family well-being and the materiality of the houses was a persistent concern for most of the second homeowners in our study, whether this led to the preservation or discarding of certain materials. At the same time, it was a "wider family matter", which means that the owners were responsible for a temporally elongated collective, for which they could not always be, in concrete terms, rationally representative. Therefore, musealization in the second home is woven into family-making. It is at once an effect and a co-creator, similar to how museums are woven into the making of culture and cultural affiliation. Broadly, musealization can be seen as a specific symptom of the post-modern condition – that is, humans needing "a form of temporal anchoring in the face of loss of tradition and unsettlement brought about by the increased tempo of technological and related change" (Macdonald 2013:138). One could state that musealization in second homes exemplifies a similar way of achieving ontological security through belonging (Bennett



Fig. 5. Two clocks on the wall. One is broken, supposed to be discarded. Photo: Inger Bjørn Knudsen.

2018). However, preservation in family-inherited second homes often occurs in an unresolved, negotiable, and movable relationship with the family culture in which a wide range of socio-material actors take part. According to Hetherington (2004:166), one of the most painful tasks for museums is the deaccession of obsolete objects. Rather than discarding those objects, museums seem to prefer storing objects in abeyance until the day they are eventually rediscovered and can be effective in museal relationships. The deaccession of objects from museum collections has been much discussed in recent years (e.g., Smeds 2015; Olsen 2018; Ahlqvist

2019). Some advocate that collections should not keep accumulating as an undigested past in museums, while others see museums as a haven for things of the past. According to Norwegian archaeologist Bjørnar Olsen (2018), museum objects do not necessarily have to be useful or functional, for instance, strategically used to create certain knowledge, stories, cohesion, or identity. According to Olsen, museums must be allowed to be pending resting places for objects otherwise regarded as obsolete. Perhaps the family-inherited second homes, with their unresolved and ongoing negotiations between use and musealization, between past, present, and future, can provide

a kind of inspiration for museum practices. In the second homes, materiality is often considered in relation to various priorities. However, these are not strictly rational and functional considerations, nor do they solely adhere to stable cultural affiliations but contain a more sensitive care for the non-present previous owners. Perhaps being sensible about the past is also about leaving certain things unresolved: Who knows exactly why an object was appreciated in the past, and who knows what interests may arise in the future? Perhaps it is about fundamentally understanding that we do not just do things with the materiality that we inherit – such as select or discard, preserve, communicate, and enact them – but also that things come to matter to us. They may not only do this when the materiality of the family-inherited second home sets limits on our individual priorities and comforts because of a “wider family matter” that must be considered. They may also do this in the institutional domain if they are left in an open and pending position or if they are physically, practically, and socially activated without much attention to the notches in their legitimate story and provenance. Of course, we realize that deaccession is necessary to some extent. However, here, we plead for holding open space for some objects and materiality that might not fit neatly into contemporary collection, research, and communication strategies; and keeping such materiality close at hand to be sensitive to its presence and its possible ways of coming to matter.

In this way, we see potential in the musealization that occurs in family-inherited second homes by virtue of its more vibrant, practical, and negotiable character while still working to connect us with the past.

NOTER

1. We use “second home” in our paper to describe the Danish concept of *sommerhus*, which refers to buildings with great variation in size, condition, and luxury. However, in Denmark these houses tend to be located in designated areas/villages near inner or outer coasts and not often individually in more remote areas, like farmholds (*ødegårde*) in Sweden and some of the cottages (*hytter eller sætergårde*) in Norway. Our use of the term “second home” is similar to previous Danish studies in the field; see references.
2. The case in Nordic countries is often that ownership of a second home is not as specifically socio-economic and class dependent as in other parts of the world. However, there might be certain groups in society that are proportionally either over- or underrepresented as second homeowners. As of 2020, 227,808 second homes are registered in Denmark (<https://www.dst.dk/da/Statistik/emner/erhvervslivets-sektorer/byggeri-og-anlaeg/bygningsbestanden>).
3. In Danish: “Det er en del af vores familiemønster, at her... her er vi fælles. Her er vi helt samlet. Det er her vi gør det.”
4. All interviews were carried out in Danish. The extracts in this paper are our translations.
5. In Danish: “Jeg tror de ville synes det var mærkeligt... De ville ikke sige noget, når nu vi har aftalt, at det er os, der skal have det. Det ville de synes var i orden, men samhørigheden ville lidt forsvinde, det er jo det her, vi plejer at være fælles om. Så det med at skifte ud, det vil vi gøre lige så stille.”

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*Inger Bjørn Knudsen, Curator
Lemvig Museum, DK 7620 Lemvig, Denmark
ibk@lemvigmuseum.dk*

*Line Vestergaard Knudsen, Associate Professor,
Department of Politics and Society, Aalborg
University, Fibigerstræde 1,
DK 9220 Aalborg, Denmark
vestergaard@dps.aau.dk,
Orcid: 0000-0003-1783-4397*